SELF-COMPASSION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG EMPLOYEES IN COMPANIES IMPLEMENTING LAYOFFS

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to mass layoffs in companies worldwide, including Indonesia, which has been further exacerbated by the global recession in 2023. These mass layoffs not only impact the mental well-being of affected employees but also the psychological state of those still employed in related companies. Previous studies have shown that the uncertain employment situation creates feelings of worry, demotivation, difficulty sleeping, and unexplained anger. This study focuses on the importance of self-compassion, which encourages individuals to accept their imperfections and negative emotions without drowning in them. Therefore, self-compassion is believed to assist employees facing layoffs in managing the situation calmly, wisely, and logically. When planning future steps in the event of layoffs, self-compassion serves as a robust foundation, enabling employees to make informed and proactive decisions. The research using Spearman's correlation, conducted in Jakarta with a sample size of 101 active employees whose companies have recently carried out mass layoffs, found a significant positive relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being of employees in companies that have terminated employment (r = 0.821, p < 0.05). The study suggests that self-compassion can be an adaptive strategy to promote well-being and positive psychological functioning during difficult times. Further research could explore different data collection techniques and study subjects.

Keywords: *Self-compassion, psychological well-being, employee, layoff, covid-19*

INTRODUCTION

Employees are one of the important pillars of every company (Sanjaya, 2021). Managing employees is a complex task due to the challenges they face both within and outside the workplace. Negative emotions and thoughts can arise from unhealthy interactions with coworkers and work-related setbacks (Dodson & Heng, 2021). Moreover, a highly competitive work environment adds to the burden on employees as the expectations for work achievement increase. One of the major challenges faced by employees worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic has been mass layoffs. In Indonesia

alone, millions of employees were laid off because of the pandemic.

Additionally, the global recession in 2023 is expected to further contribute to layoffs. Economic indicators such as a decline in jobs, an increase in unemployment, and a contraction in manufacturing revenues reflect the negative impact on overall economic conditions (Idris, 08 November 2022). Various industries in Indonesia, including textiles, rubber, and cigarette manufacturing, have already experienced a decrease in orders and profitability, leading to the threat of more layoffs for employees (Karunia, 09 November 2022).

Mass terminations of employment not only affect the psychological well-being of those directly affected, but also impact the well-being of surviving employees. Witnessing layoffs can lead to feelings of concern and worry, which can decrease focus and motivation, resulting in decreased work performance (Widyantari, Prapunoto, & Kristijanto, 2020). Moreover, employees who witness coworkers experiencing layoffs may feel anxious about their own job security (Kube, 2017). This sense of insecurity can lead to stress, anxiety, decreased self-confidence, and other negative emotions (Dooly in Padiansyah, 1999). The uncertainty about job continuity can also decrease productivity and effectiveness, impacting collaboration and team success. In this case, it is also important for companies to pay attention to the psychological well-being condition of employees who are still working. Psychological well-being of employees while working is one of the determining factors in maintaining them as the driving force of the company (Utami,

2020). By promoting psychological well-being, companies can improve work performance, reduce turnover rates, and create an engaged workforce (Page & Vella-Brodrick in Utami, 2020).

According to Ryff and Keyes (1995), psychological well-being is a psychological state of a healthy individual characterized by the positive development in the process of achieving self-actualization. Psychological well-being consisting of six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relationships, personal growth, meaningful goals, mastery of the environment and autonomy, (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Self-acceptance is a psychological condition in which the individual is able to fully accept and acknowledge himself, both in his current circumstances and past experiences. Self-actualization is a process that involves strong feelings of empathy and compassion for all humans. The high level of positive relation with others in individuals allows them to build warm relationships, trust each other, have high empathy, and show affection for others. One of the keys for individuals to function optimally is to have self-openness to existing experiences. A high level of personal growth in individuals results in an open attitude to new experiences, awareness of one's potential, and willingness and initiative to continually develop oneself in a way that reflects broader self-knowledge and increases effectiveness. Mental health involves beliefs that give individuals the feeling that their lives have a purpose and meaning. The mastery of environment emphasizes the individual's ability to actively participate in the world and creatively transform it through physical and mental activity, as well as being able to take

advantage of opportunities that exist in the surrounding environment. Individuals who are able to function fully are described as having an internal locus of evaluation (autonomy). This means that the individual does not rely on approval or judgment from others,but is more likely to evaluate themselves based on their personal standards and values (Ryff & Singer, 1996). Individuals with high psychological well-being tend to be more flexible, productive, engaged, and live longer (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener in Saraswati & Teja, 2018).

Psychological well-being, as mentioned by Skomorovsky & Sudom in Saraswati & Teja (2018), is influenced by a variety of complex factors. These factors include age, type of occupation, marital status, individual personality, as well as negative life events. However, when looking at the context of the work, there are several aspects that determine psychological well-being, namely the nature of the work itself, the work environment, and employee's satisfaction with their work. Employees who have a positive attitude towards their work will feel happy and satisfied with themselves. Conversely, employees who have a negative attitude towards their work tend to experience a variety of emotional, mental, and physical problems, as stated by Maslach & Leiter (1997). In other words, work is a large part of a person's life and can be considered a fundamental factor in psychological well-being. Therefore, it is important for companies to create working conditions that support and promote the psychological well-being of employees.

Psychological well-being is considered more important than the quality of working life as it encompasses broader psychological aspects and can affect a person's overall happiness and well-being. Good psychological well-being leads to a better work-life balance, increased motivation, creativity, and productivity (Widyantari et al., 2020). When individuals feel happy, satisfied, and emotionally balanced, they are more likely to perform well at work and positively contribute to the organization.

According to Ryff (1995), factors that affect psychological well-being consist of internal factors, namely age, gender, religiosity, personality and stress, as well as external factors, namely culture and social support. Individuals can make efforts to improve positive well-being by self-talk, seeking positive social support, being physically active, mindfulness and self-respect. Researchers have found that self-compassion can be an adaptive strategy for promoting well-being and positive psychological functioning in difficult times (Allen & Leary in Dodson & Heng, 2020). Self-compassion involves being empathetic and caring towards oneself, accepting all forms of suffering, failures, and weaknesses as a natural part of the human experience (Neff, 2003). It is characterized by warmth, empathy, sensitivity, and patience when facing various situations in life, allowing individuals to provide support and understanding to themselves without excessive self-judgment or criticism (Fuochi, Veneziani, & Voci, 2018).

Self-compassion consists of three main components: self-kindness vs self-judgment, common humanity vs isolation, and mindfulness vs over-identification (Neff,

2013). Self-kindness is an attitude of caring and accepting oneself rather than criticizing or judging (self-judgment). Neff (2011) defines common humanity as an individual's awareness of the universal human experience (e.g., difficulty, failure, lack of self). It helps the individual to demean the thought that he or she is isolated from the rest of the world when experiencing suffering. Brown and Ryan (in Neff 2011) define mindfulness as a clear and balanced awareness of the experiences that occur, so that individuals do not ignore or reflect on aspects of themselves and their lives that they do not like. Self-compassion has been associated with reduced stress levels, increased positive emotions, improved coping abilities, higher levels of resilience, and motivation for self-improvement (Aritmisu & Hofmann, 2015; Allen & Leary, 2010; Breines & Chen, 2012). Individuals with self-compassion tend to face challenges calmly, recover from failures more easily, have higher life satisfaction, and develop better interpersonal relationships (Neff, Hsieh, & Dejitterat, 2005). By nurturing a self-compassionate attitude, individuals can enhance their overall psychological well-being and pursue personal growth.

Empirical studies have shown that self-compassion can be beneficial in helping individuals with negative self-talk. It involves having a gentle attitude toward oneself, recognizing shared humanity, and developing present-focused self-awareness. This research aims to explore the relationship between self-compassion and the psychological well-being of employees in a company implementing layoffs. Additionally, the study aims to encourage companies conducting layoffs to prioritize the psychological well-being of their employees. Given the current focus on layoffs in Indonesia due to the pandemic and global recession, this research is expected to have significant relevance and impact.

METHOD

Research Design

This research was conducted with a non-experimental correlational quantitative approach. Data obtained from research in the form of numbers will be analyzed through statistical tests (Sugiyono, 2009) using JASP software. The statistical tests performed include reliability and validity tests, descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation, score distribution), normality assumption test, and correlation test.

Participants

The population consisted of active employees whose companies are/have (in the last six months) conducted mass layoffs in Jakarta. A total of 101 participants were sampled in this study with the sampling technique used was convenience sampling with a non-probability sampling approach. Convenience sampling obtained data based on the availability and willingness of participants to participate in the study (Creswell, 2012).

Research Instrument

This research used psychological scales (with the Likert scale model) as a measuring instrument that contained statements that reflect certain patterns of behavior. Participants are asked to determine whether the statement reflects their behavior

by answering yes or no, or by choosing one of several answer options provided (Marliani, 2010). The instrument used to measure self-compassion is The Self-compassion Scale by Neff (2003) which was translated into Indonesian by Sugianto, Suwartono, and Sutanto (2020). The total number of valid items on the measuring instrument was 26 (α = 0.928, r = 0.337 - 0.732). Examples of Self-compassion Scale items are "I am kind to myself when I experience suffering" and "I do not accept and judge my weaknesses and my shortcomings". Furthermore, in answering item statements, participants are asked to fill in each word according to themselves and to determine each weight on a Likert scale from favorable items on a scale of 1 (Almost Never) to 5 (Almost All the Time). However, when the item is unfavorable, the opposite is true.

Psychological well-being was measured using the instrument The Scale of Psychological Well-being (SPWB) by Ryff and Keyes (1995) which was adapted into Indonesian and modified in the context of the work environment by Dwi Riyanti (Natalia, 2008). The total number of valid items on the measuring instrument was 60 (α = 0.974, r = 0.305 - 0.830). Examples of Psychological Well-being Scale items are "I feel happy with the way I am" and "I often feel lonely where I work because I have few close friends that I can share with.". Furthermore, in answering item statements, participants are asked to fill in each word according to themselves and to determine each weight on a Likert scale from favorable items on a scale of 1 - 6. Scale 1 indicates Strongly Disagree on the statement, 2 denotes Strongly Disagree, 3 means Slightly Disagree, 4 signifies Slightly Agree,

5 represents Agree, while scale 6 means Strongly Agree. owever, when the item is unfavorable, the opposite is true.

Based on the validity test against The Scale of Psychological Well-being consisting of 63 items, there are 60 items that have been proven valid with a correlation value range (r) between 0.305 to 0.830. There are three items that are invalid because they have a correlation value (r) of less than 0.3. Therefore, researchers decided to eliminate these three items from the data analysis in this study. Thus, there were 60 items from the scale of psychological well-being used in this study. The validity test results for The Self-Compassion Scale have a correlation value with an r value range of 0.337 – 0.732. However, there is 1 item that cannot be used because there is an error in the assessment. Thus, researchers decided to use only 25 items from The Self-compassion Scale. The results of the Reliability Test using Cronbach's Alpha for The Psychological Well-Being Scale obtained a value of 0.974 and The Self-Compassion Scale of 0.928. Thus, both scales are reliable and can be used in this study.

Data Analysis Technique

To test the hypothesis, data analysis was carried out with a correlational test using JASP 17.1. (Jeffery's Amazing Statistics Program) application and an alpha level (α) of 0.05. The data analysis included descriptive analysis (standard deviation, minimum and maximum values, and mean), normality tests, and hypothesis testing. The normality test method used is the Shapiro-Wilk test, as well as the value and direction of skewness seen in descriptive analysis. This

normality test is important to enable researchers to determine the most appropriate analysis method for conducting hypothesis testing.

Through the normality test, the data distribution can be said to be normal if the Shapiro-Wilk test shows a p-value> 0.05. On the other hand, positive or negative values of skewness will show the tendency of data to accumulate on the left or right of the data distribution. Based on the results of this normality test, the researcher found that the distribution of the research data was not normal because the p-value < 0.05. In addition, the skewness of the data is negative, so it can be concluded that the data values accumulate in the right part of the distribution. Based on the results of the normality test, researchers used Spearman's correlation to test the research hypothesis.

RESULT

From the results of data filtering, up to 101 participants met all criteria. Most participants were female with a percentage of 66%, worked for 3 months to over 3 years, and are aged between 22 - 33. Furthermore, 30% work in the wholesale trade industry.

Table 1
Descriptive Analysis Results

	Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Self-Compassion	101	85.36	16.08	41.00	122.00
Psychological Well-Being	101	251.56	51.45	104.00	351.00

The descriptive analysis showed that the average score of participants using The Self-compassion Scale measuring instrument was 85.36, with a standard deviation of 16.08. Meanwhile, there was a minimum score of 41 and a maximum of 122. The average participants' score on SPWB was 251.56, with a standard deviation of 51.45. The distribution ranged from 104 to 351. In this study, by referring to the standard deviation values in the two research variables are low, it can be concluded that the scores in the data are around the average.

In this study, normality tests are carried out with the aim of determining appropriate data analysis techniques (parametric or non-parametric) based on the type of data present. The normality assumption test method used was the Shapiro-Wilk test. If the p value of the normality assumption test result (p-value) is greater than 0.05, then the result is not significant, and the data is considered normally distributed. However, if the p value is less than 0.05, then the result is significant and the data is considered not normally distributed (Field, 2009). The results of the normality assumption test of the two measuring instruments used show a p value of less than 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data from the two variables are not normally distributed.

Table 2
Normality Test Results

	Skewness	SE of Skewness	Shapiro-Wilk	P-Value
Self-Compassion	-0.592	0.240	0.966	0.010
Psychological Well-Being	-0.672	0.240	0.950	7.725×10^{-4}

Based on the normality assumption test that has been done, the researchers used a non-parametric correlation test, namely the Spearman correlation to test the correlation between self-compassion and psychological well-being of employees in companies that terminate employment. The following are the correlation results in this study calculated through JASP software.

Table 3
Correlation Test Results of Self-Compassion and Psychological Well-Being

	Spearman's Rho	P-Value
Self-Compassion – Psychological Well-Being	0.821	8.673×10^{-26}

The Spearman's correlation shows that there is a positive significant relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being of employees in companies that implemented layoffs ($r = 0.821$, $n = 101$, $p < 0.05$, $r^2 = 0.658$). It can be concluded that H0 in this study is rejected, while H1 is accepted.

Table 4
Correlation Test Results of Self-Compassion and Psychological Well-Being Dimensions

Variabel 1	Dimensi Variabel 2	Spearman's Rho	P-Value	R^2
Self-Compassion	*Positive Relations with Others*	0.663	4.099×10^{-14}	43.96%
	Autonomy	0.694	8.036×10^{-16}	48.16%
	Environmental Mastery	0.819	1.427×10^{-25}	67.08%
	Personal Growth	0.671	1.713×10^{-14}	45.02%
	Purpose in Life	0.742	6.403×10^{-19}	55.06%
	Self-Acceptance	0.793	4.684×10^{-19}	62.88%

To support the hypothesis test results, additional analysis was conducted by testing the correlation of self-compassion with each dimension of psychological well-being. The results show that there is a significant positive relationship between self-compassion and each dimension of psychological well-being, known from the significance value ($p < 0.05$). The largest correlation is self-compassion with the environmental mastery dimension with a percentage of 67.08%.

DISCUSSION

The results of this research support the hypothesis which states that there is a significant positive relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being of employees in companies that have terminated their employment. This means that the higher the employees' self-compassion, the higher their psychological well-being, and vice versa. Furthermore, the results of this study are in line with previous research which proves that self-compassion has a significant relationship with positive mental health and adaptive functioning (Neff, 2004) for individuals facing difficult times (Allen & Leary in Dodson & Heng, 2020).

Based on the researcher's analysis of employee responses to open-ended questions, it is evident that employees at a company undergoing or experiencing terminations feel a sense of insecurity regarding their own employment. They express concern about the future of their work and whether they too will face termination. Employees have diverse ways of responding to such changes, but the presence of self-compassion is crucial in helping them cope with this uncertain situation. Those with a higher level of self-compassion are better able to manage themselves and their environment. They exhibit greater wisdom in decision-making, independence in facing challenges, and a sense of purpose in life.

On the other hand, employees with low levels of self-compassion tend to feel hopeless and engage in self-deprecating behavior when confronted with uncertainty. Prolonged exposure to these negative emotions can lead to withdrawal from social interactions and adversely affect psychological well-being. This, in turn, can diminish motivation, productivity, and result in sleep disturbances and emotional fluctuations (Widyantari et al., 2020; Kube, 2017). Therefore, it is important for employees to cultivate and maintain self-compassion as a means of safeguarding their psychological well-being, while companies should also prioritize the mental health of their employees to ensure effective job performance (Widyantari et al., 2020).

Conceptually, the strong relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being can be explained by the existence of dimensional linkages in which the two variables are interconnected with each of the forming dimensions (Wardi & Ningsih, 2021). This study proves this concept and finds that self-compassion has a significant positive relationship with each dimension that makes up psychological well-being. Two dimensions of psychological well-being have the strongest relationship with self-compassion, namely environmental mastery and self-acceptance.

Research has shown that employees with higher levels of self-compassion are more capable of mastering their environment, meaning they have a better ability to create and maintain a beneficial surrounding environment and control their actions and behaviors within it (Ryff & Singer, 2003). This was proven in an experiment conducted by Breines and Chen in 2012, where self-compassion showed a significant positive impact on increasing self-improvement motivation. Essentially, self-compassion encourages individuals to have a desire to develop themselves through the learning process, face new challenges, and

continuously improve themselves. This, in turn, allows employees to enhance their skills and abilities through the tasks and responsibilities they currently have and enables them to effectively manage their lives.

Furthermore, self-compassion is also associated with self-acceptance, which involves embracing both positive and negative aspects of oneself (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). By cultivating self-acceptance through self-compassion, employees can develop positive mindsets and behaviors when faced with uncertainty in their work environment. Overall, self-compassion plays a crucial role in enhancing employees' ability to adapt and grow by creating a beneficial environment, overall success, and accepting themselves fully.

According to the results, some areas can be improved in the methodological aspects. A convenience sampling method was used in this research so there is a possibility that the participants collected are not truly representative of the population. Individuals who are willing to participate may have actively volunteered, resulting in the likelihood that they possess specific distinctive traits not representative of the entire population.

CONCLUSION

Self-compassion is crucial for employees' psychological well-being, especially when witnessing coworkers being laid off. It helps to control negative feelings and prepare for future challenges. This research recommended that employees who are still working for a company that is or has been laid off form a support group. The support group will help employees maintain their self-compassion and psychological well-being. Support groups will provide emotional support, exchange of information and resources, skill building, recovery, and enhance a sense of control and self-recovery. These functions play a significant role in helping employees cope with the impact of layoffs and preparing them to face new challenges in their careers.

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